

Thailand: Finding God in Bangkok's red-light district

July 1, 2014

I always like to think God has a sense of humor. It makes me laugh the way God has placed me in a country I never thought I'd be in, with people I never would have been friends with, working with and loving people I never could have seen myself working with in a million years.



Alyssa Campbell I think God has a sense of humor and loves to make us uncomfortable so we can grow in him and for his glory. These past weeks in Bangkok have been the perfect picture of God's sense of humor, faithfulness, promises and beautiful love.

Coming to Bangkok, I knew I would have a daytime ministry at Creative Life Foundation and an outreach in the red-light district. That outreach would consist of me going into the bars and building relationships. Although I knew that that's what I would be doing, I had no idea what to expect or the crazy things I would see and experience when I walked into that red-light district the first time.

Our leader, Cassie, prepared me to prayer-walk the area. She did an awesome job walking me through what a typical night in the bar or red-light district was like and what to expect. Although I knew she had

prepared me well and I was just prayer-walking that evening and not actually going into the bars, I prayed at that moment the Lord would completely take hold of my heart and pour his love on me. I needed confidence not from myself but through God. I knew, without a doubt, I would not be able to do this ministry on my own.

Surrounded by darkness

When I walked to the street, I faced so much sin—almost every sin imaginable—and was completely surrounded by darkness. I had never seen or experienced anything like it in my life. I stood face-to-face with darkness. As we started prayer-walking the plaza, I cried out to the Lord for his Holy Spirit to surround me, Cassie and these people.

As we walked past bar after bar and numerous men and women, we prayed out loud. The longer we walked and prayed and the more bars we passed, I could feel God's presence and his hope even more. As girls were begging for us to come in, I prayed out loud for their hearts and for them to one day soon know their Creator who made them in his image. During this prayer, I got chills and couldn't help but smile. I had felt the joy of the Lord and hope for his people.

Longing to be loved

The night was heavy and the atmosphere was so dark. As I looked around I could see so much sin and so many lost and broken people just trying to please or fill themselves with the world. I could see it in their eyes. They long to be loved, they long to hear they are beautiful, and they long to feel special. But the love and attention they are receiving is really just breaking them inside and is only temporary.

The men and women consumers are searching for something and missing something in their lives—looking to fill themselves but with the worldly pleasures. Looking around is heartbreaking.

But I prayed that night, asking God to break my heart for what breaks his heart. I asked God to give me his eyes so I may see people as he created them to be. Praying this prayer and seeing all that I saw brought me to tears.

I felt hope

I felt so many emotions, but there was one that was so much greater than all the rest. It was hope. God was present in that place. He heard my cry, and he longs for those people to know their Creator and heavenly Father.

Never, ever, have I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit like I did that night walking and praying through that plaza. The darkest place I had ever been was the place that the Spirit revealed himself to me in such a huge way.

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